Shri Gurdev Singh, father of Lance Naik Jagsir Singh died and Smt. Hazra Begam, mother of Sapper Mohammad Arif expired during 2002. Further, on investigation it was also learnt that Mrs. Noorchasmi Khatun *alias* Gudia wife of Sapper Mohammad Arif got remarried to Shri Toufique in April, 2003. The information regarding these personnel being in the custody of Law Enforcement Agency in Pakistan was received in December, 2003. Consequently, the families were informed regarding their whereabouts and well being.

Compassionate appointment

†325. SHRI MOTILAL VORA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of applications for appointment on compassionate ground in various departments of Ministry of Defence received by Government during last three years till date;

(b) the number of persons who have been given appointments each year out of the applications so received and the number of persons whose applications have been rejected alongwith the number of pending cases; and

(c) the reasons for rejected and pending cases?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) and (b) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

(c) As per extant policy on compassionate appointment, only 5% of the Group 'C & 'D' vacancies to be filled up through direct recruitment are available for making appointment on compassionate grounds. Large number of cases are pending or have to be rejected due to non-availability of adequate vacancies for the purpose.

Fabrication of Aluminium Caskets by DRDO

326. SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) had expressed its ability to indigenously design and fabricate Aluminium caskets which were imported from USA at a very high cost as reported by Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG);

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(b) if so, whether the Aluminium Association of India had approached Master General of Ordnance Branch, Equipment Management Directorate, offering assistance for indigenous production of caskets;

(c) whether feasibility for manufacturing such caskets indigenously has already been ascertained by selected Army Base Workshops (ABWs); and

(d) if so, approximate cost per casket estimated by the ABWs?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) DRDO had received a proposal for indigenous development of Aluminium Caskets in March, 1996. The project was fore-closed at prototype stage as per the advice of Master General of Ordnance (MGO), Army HQrs on 2nd July, 1997.

(b) The offer of assistance came from Aluminium Association of India in August, 2000 after signing of the contract by Ministry of Defence with M/s Duitron and Baiza, Texas USA in August, 1999 for supply of Aluminium caskets.

(c) The feasibility was not ascertained at the time of procuring the caskets.

(d) Does not arise in view of reply at (c) above.

Adequate police personnel for safety of vulnerable sections of society

327. SHRI MANOJ BHATTACHARYA: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item appearing in the media recently wherein it has been stated that excessive centralization of police manpower to give security coverage to the VIPs and VVIPs in one important factor contributing to the inadequate posting of police personnel to look after the securities of elderly people, senior citizens and ladies etc.; and

(b) if so, what steps are proposed to make adequate police personnel available for these vulnerable sections of society?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI SRIPRAKASH JAISWAL): (a) Yes, Sir. Security of VIPs is the responsibility of the concerned State/UT where the protectee happens to be. The States and UTs have been advised by Ministry of Home Affairs to provide effective security to VIPs without excessive deployment of security personnel.